# 6.0 CULTURAL RESOURCES

This chapter provides an overview of prehistoric and historic human use of the Dry Creek Greenway Regional Vision project area, and evaluates potential adverse impacts to cultural resources from project implementation. Because the locations of amenities shown in the Vision are approximate, potential impacts are evaluated at a programmatic rather than project-specific level. Additional evaluation of potential impacts to cultural resources will be required as individual projects are proposed for development.

## 6.1 Environmental Setting

### 6.1.1 Cultural Setting

The area encompassing the Dry Creek Greenway Vision area has a long history of prehistoric use by humans. Indigenous people occupied the Sacramento Valley region and foothills of the Sierra Nevada for thousands of years prior to the arrival of Euro-American settlers in the mid-1800s. The earliest evidence of prehistoric human occupation of the area comes from a single, deeply buried site in the bank of Arcade Creek, north of Sacramento, containing grinding tools and large, stemmed projectile points. The points and grinding implements suggest an occupation date of some time between 6000 and 3000 B.C. (Wallace 1978). However, diagnostic artifacts recovered from the Dry Creek area in the 1960s are typical of the Central California Late Horizon. It was not until after about 3500 B.C., in the Late Archaic Period, that people began to move into the San Joaquin and Sacramento Valleys in any significant numbers (Chartkoff and Chartkoff 1984). This earliest permanent settlement of the Delta region of the Sacramento River is called the Windmiller Tradition, and is known primarily from burial sites containing relatively elaborate grave goods in or near the floodplain (Ragir 1972). The Windmiller Tradition reflects the strengthening of cultural trends originating in the Middle Archaic, as seen in the proliferation of finished artifacts such as projectile points, shell beads and pendants, and highly polished charm stones. Stone mortars and pestles, milling stones, bone tools, such as fishhooks, awls, and pins are also present. It is likely that these people subsisted on deer and other game, salmon, and hard seeds. They also appear to have been the first Californians to discover the process of leaching tannins out of acorns to make them edible by humans. Based on linguistic evidence, it has been suggested that the Windmiller Tradition is ancestral to several historic tribes in the Central Valley, including the Penutian-speaking Nisenan (Elsasser 1978). The Windmiller Tradition lasted until about 1000 B.C.

Around 1000 B.C., subsistence strategies in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta region became more focused on specific food resources, with a clear increase in the reliance on acorns and salmon (Chartkoff and Chartkoff 1984; Elsasser 1978). This cultural period has been named the Cosumnes Tradition (1700 B.C. to A.D. 500), and appears to be an outgrowth of the Windmiller Tradition (Ragir 1972). These people continued to occupy knolls or similar high spots above the floodplain of the Sacramento River and the terraces of its tributaries flowing out of the foothills of the Sierra Nevada range to the east. Populations increased and villages became more numerous than before, with more milling tools and specialized equipment for hunting and fishing. Burials containing larger amounts of seashell and obsidian provide evidence that trade with outside areas increased. Burial styles also became more varied with the increased trade.

Projectile points found embedded in the bones of excavated skeletons suggest that warfare was on the rise, perhaps because of increased competition over resources and trade (Beardsley 1954).

The final distinct prehistoric culture is known as the Hotchkiss Tradition (A.D. 500 to 1769), which persisted until the arrival of Europeans in central California (Beardsley 1954; Ragir 1972). The use of acorns and salmon reached its peak during this period. Diet was supplemented with the addition of waterfowl, deer, hard seeds, and other food resources. Large, permanent villages were common along the lower Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers and their tributaries, as well as within the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The size and density of these settlements suggest a further increase in population from the period of the Cosumnes Tradition. Trade goods were plentiful, and burials of this time show a marked stratification of society, with large differences in the amount and variety of grave goods. Cremation of the dead also appeared during this period (Chartkoff and Chartkoff 1984). Ornamental or ritual artifacts, such as large, fragile projectile points and trimmed bird bone increased during this period, with milling tools rare or absent. Shell beads continued in large numbers, and there are numerous utilitarian artifacts of bones, such as awls, needles, and barbed harpoon points. Polished charm stones are rarer, but ground stone pipes became more common. Fired and unfired clay objects begin to appear.

The Dry Creek Greenway Vision area is within the ethnographic territory of the Penutian-speaking Nisenan, one of three Maiduan-speaking tribelets inhabiting the northeastern half of the Sacramento Valley and the adjoining western slopes of the Sierra Nevada. The Nisenan, also known as the Southern Maidu, lived along the main stems and tributaries of the American, Yuba, and Bear Rivers, as well as the lower reaches of the Feather River. Their territory extended from above the junction of the Feather and Sacramento rivers on the north to a few miles south of the American River in the south. The Sacramento River bounded the territory on the west and extended close to Lake Tahoe in the east. The Valley Nisenan lived mainly along the Sacramento River in large villages with populations of several hundred each. Between there and the foothills, the grassy plains were largely unsettled, used mainly as a foraging ground by both valley and hill groups. Individual and extended families maintained possession over specific hunting and gathering grounds, and trespassing was discouraged (Kroeber 1976; Wilson and Towne 1978 and 1982).

The Nisenan were divided into political tribelets made up of a primary village and a series of outlying hamlets, presided over by an essentially hereditary chief (Kroeber 1976; Wilson and Towne 1978 and 1982). Villages typically included family dwellings consisting of conical houses covered with bark slabs, acorn granaries, a sweathouse, and a dance house owned by the chief. The chief had no authority on his or her own (females could become chief if no competent male relative could be found). Authority came from the support of the shaman and the villagers, but with this support the word of the chief became virtually the law. The principal village in the Dry Creek watershed area was probably Pichiku, located halfway between Auburn and Sacramento.

The Spanish came to the Central Valley around 1769, and by 1776 the Miwok territory bordering the Nisenan on the south had been explored by Jose Canizares. In 1808 Gabriel Moraga crossed Nisenan territory, and in 1813 a major battle was fought between the Miwok and Spaniards near the mouth of the Cosumnes River. Though the Nisenan appear to have escaped the removal of tribes into the Spanish missions, they were not spared the ravages of diseases introduced by the

Europeans. In 1833 an epidemic, probably malaria or smallpox, raged through the Sacramento Valley, killing an estimated 75% of the native population. When John Sutter erected his fort at the present site of Sacramento, he had no problem getting the few Nisenan survivors to settle nearby. The discovery of gold in 1848 near the Nisenan village of Colluma (and present town of Coloma) drew thousands of miners into the area and led to the widespread killing and virtual destruction of traditional Nisenan culture. By the time of the Great Depression, no Nisenan remained who could remember the days before the arrival of the whites (Wilson and Towne 1978 and 1982).

Shortly after the discovery of gold in 1848, the region became heavily populated with prospectors, businessmen, and others looking to make their fortunes in the goldfields. The present day communities of Loomis, Rocklin, Newcastle, Penryn, and Auburn arose from mining camps and related centers of activity that were established in the mid-1850s. Around this same period, Roseville became established as a railroad town and local center of commerce. Following the mining boom, many former prospectors settled in these communities and returned to the more familiar livelihoods of ranching and farming in the rich uplands and bottomlands of Dry Creek and its tributaries. Evidence of historic mining activities, including ditches, pits, small mounds, and low terraces, is still present along many of the drainages in the project area (Michael Brandman Associates 1992).

### 6.1.2 Paleontological Resources

Portions of the project area contain geologic formations with the potential to contain paleontological resources. Formations with the potential to include paleontological resources are the result of the Sierra Nevada foothills region being located at or near the former shoreline of an inland sea that once occupied the present Central Valley area during most of the time represented by its rock records (Placer County 1994b). Changes in sea level caused deposition of marine and non-marine sediments, providing potentially favorable conditions for preserving fossils of animals and plants.

## 6.2 Regulatory Setting

Cultural resources are defined as buildings, structures, sites, features, or other artifacts that may have archaeological, historical, architectural, and/or scientific importance. A number of laws, regulations, and statutes have been instituted at the federal and state levels to provide for the protection and management of cultural resources. These laws include: the Antiquities Act of 1906; Historic Sites Act of 1935; Reservoir Salvage Act of 1960; National Historic Preservation Act of 1966; National Environmental Policy Act of 1969; Executive Order 11593 (Projection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment, May 13, 1971); 36 CFR 800 and CFR 60 (Advisory Council on Historic Preservation: Protection of Historic and Cultural Properties, Amendments to Existing Regulations, January 30, 1979, National Register of Historic Places, Nominations by States and Federal Agencies, Rules and Regulations, January 9, 1976); Revisions to 36 CFR 800 (Protection of Historic Properties, January 10, 1986); Archaeological and Historical Preservation Act of 1974; American Indian Religious Freedom Joint Resolution of 1978; Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979; Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990; and the California Environmental Quality Act. Together, these regulations and guidelines establish a comprehensive program for the identification, evaluation, and treatment of cultural resources.

CEQA requires that public or private projects financed or approved by the state must include an assessment of potential impacts to cultural resources. If project implementation could result in significant effects to important cultural resources, CEQA requires that alternative plans and/or mitigation measures be considered to avoid or reduce such impacts. Section 15064.5 of CEQA defines "historical resources" as those that are listed or eligible to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places; listed or eligible to be listed on the California Register of Historical Resources; registered or eligible to be registered as a State Historical Landmark; or included in any local register of historical resources.

## 6.2.1 Local (Placer County)

Local policies and regulations concerning cultural and paleontological resources relevant to the proposed project include Placer County regulations and requirements outlined in the Placer County General Plan, the Dry Creek-West Placer Community Plan, the Granite Bay Community Plan, and the Horseshoe Bar/Penryn Community Plan. The Greenway Vision and implementation recommendations were planned specifically to identify and emphasize common shared values as expressed in existing goals and policies of regional jurisdictions. As such, the Vision components are designed to be consistent with the goals and policies of Placer County and unincorporated community plan areas. When future projects are proposed for implementation, they will be individually evaluated for consistency with General Plan and community plans' goals and policies. Although the cities of Roseville and Rocklin and the Town of Loomis are not adopting the Greenway Vision, those communities outside of the proposed project area have adopted many similar goals and policies.

The policies listed below were excerpted from a review of the Placer County General Plan, Dry Creek-West Placer Community Plan, Granite Bay Community Plan, and Horseshoe Bar/Penryn Community Plan. Because many of the policies found in the community plans are similar to those contained in the county-wide Placer County General Plan, only policies unique to particular community plans are listed.

### Placer County General Plan

***Policies:***

5.D.3. The County shall solicit the views of the Native American Heritage Commission and/or the local Native American community in cases where development may result in disturbance to sites containing evidence of Native American activity and/or to sites of cultural importance.

5.D.4. The County shall coordinate with the cities and municipal advisory councils in the county to promote the preservation and maintenance of Placer County's paleontological and archaeological resources.

5.D.6. The County shall require that discretionary development projects identify and protect from damage, destruction, and abuse, important historical, archaeological, paleontological, and cultural sites and their contributing environment. Such assessments shall be incorporated into a countywide cultural resource data base, to be maintained by the Department of Museums.

5.D.7. The County shall require that discretionary development projects are designed to avoid potential impacts to significant paleontological or cultural resources, whenever possible. Unavoidable impacts, whenever possible, shall be reduced to a less than significant level and/or shall be mitigated by extracting recoverable data. Determinations of impacts, significance, and mitigation shall be made by qualified archaeological (in consultation with recognized local Native American groups), historical, or paleontological consultants, depending on the type of resource in question.

**Dry Creek West Placer Community Plan**

***Policies:***

6. Encourage compatible recreational use of open space areas and riparian areas along streams and creeks in the area, where feasible.

8. Require site-specific studies for archaeological or historical sites in all instances where land development has the potential to have a detrimental impact on these sites.

## 6.3 Environmental Impacts

This section identifies and discusses potential impacts to cultural resources within the project boundaries, and provides mitigation measures to reduce the levels of impact. The analysis of potential impacts to cultural resources is based on a review of proposed improvements depicted in the Vision in light of the cultural resource setting in the project area. Due to the large size and wide geographic area of the proposed project area, and the fact that project amenity locations are approximate for this program level analysis, no field surveys were conducted during preparation of this EIR. More detailed assessments of potential impacts to cultural resources, including conducting site-specific field surveys, will be necessary as part of the future environmental review processes for specific project elements identified in the Vision. The Native American Heritage Commission responded to the project's Notice of Preparation with recommendations which are included in the mitigation section of this chapter, along with standard Placer County mitigation requirements for future project level components.

### 6.3.1 Criteria for Significance

For a cultural resource to be deemed historically significant under CEQA, it must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California history and cultural heritage;
- The resource is associated with the lives of persons important to our past;
- The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic value; or
- The resource has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

In addition, Placer County has established the following impacts as those normally considered significant:

- Impacts that disrupt or adversely affect a prehistoric or historic archeological site or a property of historic or cultural significance to a community or ethnic or social group; or a paleontological site except as a part of a scientific study.
- Impacts that substantially disturb any area of possible cultural or historical significance.
- Removal of any structure determined to have historical significance.

### 6.3.2 Impacts to Cultural Resources

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| **Impact 6-1:** | Impacts to known prehistoric or historic resources |
| **Significance:** | Potentially Significant |
| **Mitigation Measures:** | Mitigation Measure 6-1, Conduct project-level cultural resource investigations. |
| **Significance after Mitigation:** | Less than significant |

Potential impacts to cultural resources could be mitigated to a less than significant level by requiring cultural resource investigations and surveys as part of the approval process for specific project components. If resources are identified within the proposed project area, the investigations will include recommendations and resource specific mitigation. These recommendations may include locating project features to avoid areas containing significant cultural resources.

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| **Impact 6-2:** | Impacts to unknown prehistoric or historic resources |
| **Significance:** | Potentially Significant |
| **Mitigation Measures:** | Mitigation Measures 6-2, Stop work if archeological artifacts, including human remains, are discovered during construction. |
| **Significance after Mitigation:** | Less than significant |

Extensive prehistoric and historic use of the Greenway project area by humans is well documented. Consequently, it is possible that human remains or burial sites may exist within the Dry Creek Greenway project area. This would be a potentially significant impact of site-specific projects.

It is possible that a potentially significant impact could occur if previously undiscovered archaeological resources are inadvertently exposed during grading and excavation activities. By halting ground disturbing activities until a qualified archaeologist and the Placer County Planning Department and Department of Museums are consulted, this impact can be mitigated to a less than significant level. The Placer County Coroner and Native American Heritage Commission must be contacted if human remains are found. The Placer County Planning Department must grant authorization to resume work.

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| **Impact 6-3:** | Impacts to paleontological resources |
| **Significance:** | Potentially Significant |
| **Mitigation Measures:** | Mitigation Measure 6-3, Retain a qualified professional paleontologist to inspect construction site weekly during grading activities and salvage fossils as necessary. |
| **Significance after Mitigation:** | Less than significant |

The geologic formations in portions of the Dry Creek Greenway Regional Vision project area have the potential to contain paleontological resources (i.e., fossils). Given the relatively shallow depths of construction associated with the types of projects identified in the Vision, the probability of encountering paleontological resources is considered low. However, it is still possible that fossil discoveries could be made during excavation activities associated with the project. This would be a potentially significant impact of the proposed project.

## 6.4 Mitigation Measures

**Mitigation Measure 6-1:** Conduct project-level cultural resource investigations. Mitigation Measure 6-1 applies to Impact 6-1.

For each specific Greenway project that is proposed, a project-level specific cultural resource investigation shall be conducted. This investigation will at a minimum include the following actions by a qualified cultural resource specialist:

- Contacting the appropriate Information Center of the California Historical Resources Information System, which will conduct a record search for previously identified cultural resources and previously conducted cultural resources investigations of the proposed project site and adjacent areas.
- Contacting the Native American Heritage Commission for a Sacred Lands File Check and a list of appropriate Native American contacts for consultation concerning the project site and to assist in the development of mitigation measures.
- If the records search determines that a site archaeological inventory survey is required, a qualified cultural resource specialist will be retained to conduct the survey.
- A professional report detailing findings and recommendations based upon the records search, consultations, and archaeological inventory survey (if conducted) will be prepared and submitted to the local Information Center and other applicable agencies as necessary.

**Mitigation Measure 6-2:** Stop work if archeological artifacts, including human remains, are discovered during construction. Mitigation Measure 6-2 applies to Impact 6-2.

If human remains are encountered during the course of project activities, all work in that area shall halt and the County coroner and Native American Heritage Commission shall be notified immediately. In addition, a qualified professional archaeologist shall be notified immediately in order to assess the resource value as soon as possible, and will provide additional measures to avoid, minimize or mitigate adverse effects to such properties.

If archaeological artifacts, exotic rock (nonnative), or unusual amounts of shell or bone are uncovered during any on-site construction activities, all work must stop within the immediately area of the find(s) and a SOPA-certified (Society of Professional Archaeologists) will be retained to evaluate the deposits. The Placer County Planning Department and Department of Museums must also be contacted for review of the archaeological find(s).

If the discovery consists of human remains, the Placer County Coroner and Native American Heritage Commission must also be contacted. Work in the area may only proceed after authorization is granted by the Placer County Planning Department. A note to this effect shall be provided on the Improvement Plans for the project.

Following a review of the new find(s) and consultation with appropriate experts, if necessary, the authority to proceed may be accompanied by the addition of development requirements which provide protection of the site and/or additional mitigation measures necessary to address the unique or sensitive nature of the site.

**Mitigation Measure 6-3:** Retain a qualified professional paleontologist to inspect construction site weekly during grading activities and salvage fossils as necessary. Mitigation Measure 6-3 applies to Impact 6-3.

Prior to submittal of any Grading or Improvement Plan, a qualified paleontologist will be retained to observe grading activities on a weekly basis during all grading activities, and to salvage fossils as necessary. The paleontologist shall establish procedures for paleontological resource surveillance and shall establish, in cooperation with the project developer, procedures for temporarily halting or redirecting work to permit sampling, identification and evaluation of fossils. If major paleontological resources are discovered, which require temporary halting or redirecting of grading, the paleontologist shall report such findings to the project developer, and to the Placer County Department of Museums and Planning Department.

The paleontologist shall determine appropriate actions, in cooperation with the project developer, which ensure proper exploration and/or salvage. Excavated finds shall be offered to a state-designated repository such as the Museum of Paleontology at University of California, Berkeley; the California Academy of Sciences; or any other state-designated repository. Otherwise, the finds shall be offered to the Placer County Department of Museums for purposes of public education and interpretive displays.

These actions, as well as final mitigation and disposition of the resources, shall be subject to approval by the Placer County Department of Museums. The paleontologist shall submit a follow-up report to Placer County Department of Museums and the Planning Department, which shall include the period of inspection, an analysis of the fossils found and present repository of fossils.